This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

In the Claims:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) Apparatus for heating elongated food items, comprising:

a housing having a pair of spaced apart side walls;

a first plurality of elongated rollers each having a rotational axis and being mounted for rotation about a respective one of the rotational axes relative to said housing in a first roller tier, each of said first plurality of rollers being spaced apart to receive the food items therebetween for contacting and transferring heat to the food items during rotation of said first plurality of rollers, said first roller tier and the rotational axes of said first plurality of rollers being fixed relative to said housing; and

a second plurality of elongated rollers each having a rotational axis and being mounted for rotation about a respective one of the rotational axes relative to said housing in a second roller tier spaced vertically apart from said first roller tier, each of said second plurality of rollers being spaced apart to receive the food items therebetween for contacting and transferring heat to the food items during rotation of said second plurality of rollers, said second roller tier and the rotational axes of said second plurality of rollers being fixed relative to said housing;

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wherein said first and second roller tiers are supported by and extend between said pair of spaced apart side walls and are staggered relative to each other from a rear to a front of said housing.

2. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first plurality of rollers in said first roller tier lie in a substantially common first plane.

3. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein said second plurality of rollers in said second roller tier lie in a substantially common second plane.

4. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said first and second planes are substantially parallel.

5. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said first and second planes are upwardly inclined from the front toward the rear of said housing.

6. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said first and second planes are substantially horizontally disposed.

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7. (ORIGINAL) Th apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a first heater control associated with said first plurality of rollers and operable to control heating of said first plurality of rollers to a predetermined temperature.

8. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising a second heater control associated with said second plurality of rollers and operable to control heating of said second plurality of rollers to a predetermined temperature.

9. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said first and second heater controls are independently controllable.

10. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a first drive mechanism associated with said first plurality of rollers and operable to rotate said first plurality of rollers.

11. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a second drive mechanism associated with said second plurality of rollers and operable to rotate said second plurality of rollers.

12. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said first and second drive mechanisms are independently controllable.

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13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) Apparatus for heating elongat d food items, comprising:

a housing having a pair of spaced apart side walls;

a first plurality of elongated rollers each having a rotational axis and being mounted for rotation about a respective one of the rotational axes between said side walls in a first roller tier, each of said first plurality of rollers being spaced apart to receive the food items therebetween for contacting and transferring heat to the food items during rotation of said first plurality of rollers, said first roller tier and the rotational axes of said first plurality of rollers being fixed relative to said housing;

a second plurality of elongated rollers each having a rotational axis and being mounted for rotation about a respective one of the rotational axes between said side walls in a second roller tier spaced vertically apart from said first roller tier, each of said second spaced apart to receive the food items therebetween for contacting and transferring heat to the food items during rotation of said second plurality of rollers, said second roller tier and the rotational axes of said second plurality of rollers being fixed relative to said housing; and

a third plurality of elongated rollers each having a rotational axis and being mounted for rotation about a respective one of the rotational axes between said side walls in a third roller tier spaced vertically apart from said first and second roller tiers, each of said third plurality of rollers being spaced apart to receive the

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food items therebetween for contacting and transferring heat to the food items during rotation of said third plurality of rollers, said third roller tier and the rotational axes of said third plurality of rollers being fixed relative to said housing:

wherein said first, second and third roller tiers are supported by and extend between said pair of spaced apart side walls and are staggered relative to each other from a rear to a front of said housing.

14. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein at least one roller of said first roller tier overlies at least one roller of said second roller tier.

15. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein at least one roller of said second roller tier overlies at least one roller of said third roller tier.

16. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said first plurality of rollers in said first roller tier lie in a substantially common first plane.

17. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said second plurality of rollers in said second roller tier lie in a substantially common second plane.

18. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said third plurality of rollers in said third roller tier lie in a substantially common third plane.

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19. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said first, second and third planes are substantially parallel.

20. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) Apparatus for heating elongated food items, comprising:

a housing having a pair of spaced apart side walls; and

a plurality of elongated rollers each having a rotational axis and being mounted for rotation about a respective one of the rotational axes relative to said housing and arranged into a plurality of vertically spaced apart roller tiers, each of said plurality of rollers being spaced apart to receive the food items therebetween for contacting and transferring heat to the food items during rotation of said plurality of rollers, each of said plurality of roller tiers and the rotational axes of said plurality of rollers being fixed relative to said housing;

wherein each of said plurality of roller tiers is supported by and extends between said pair of spaced apart side walls and is staggered relative to said other roller tiers from a rear to a front of said housing.

21. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein a roller of one of said plurality of roller tiers overlies a roller of another one of said plurality of roller tiers.

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22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method of heating elongated food items by contacting the food items with a plurality of rollers each having a rotational axis and being mounted for rotation about a respective one of the rotational axes relative to a housing having a pair of spaced apart side walls, the plurality of rollers being arranged into vertically spaced roller tiers with each roller tier and the rotational axes of [said] the plurality of rollers being fixed relative to the housing and each of [said] the plurality of roller tiers being supported by and extending between the pair of spaced apart side walls so as to be staggered relative to [said] the other roller tiers from a rear to a front of the housing, comprising:

contacting the food items with the plurality of rollers;

rotating the plurality of rollers; and

applying heat to the plurality of rotating rollers to transfer heat to the food items.

23. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of independently controlling the application of heat to the plurality of rollers in each vertically spaced roller tier.

24. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of independently controlling the rotation of the plurality of rollers in each vertically spaced roller tier.

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